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175.
THE
SUMME OF A
SERMON, PREA-
CHED AT SOW-
THELL THE THIR-
tith of March. 1596.
By T.W.



LONDON
Printed by the Widow Orwin, for Thomas
Man. 1597.

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2 of

LONDON:
Printed by W. Bowyer, for J. Warton.



Lord Iesus begin, and make an end.

A Sermon preached at Sowthell.

THE TEXT. Matth. 11. vers. 28. 29. 30.

28. Come vnto me, all ye that are wearie and laden, and I will ease you.

29. Take my yoke on you, and learne of me, that I am meeke and lowly in heart: and ye shall finde rest vnto your soules.

30. For my yoke is easie, and my burden light.



THAT brother said very well, who ere while out of this place told vs, that the exercises of this daye, are not should bee the same to our soules, that physicke is to the body. The reason is because as many times medicines helpe corporall infirmities, so these holy and heavenly exercises, of fasting, prayer, and preaching, should heale the maladies of our mindes. Though

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Though these things be true, and we willingly acknowledge the euidency & certainty of the same, in al y parts & pceces thereof, yet this also is no lesse true or certaine, that as physicians for the body, notwithstanding al their skill and experience, are sometimes deceiued, in the very particular sicknes it selfe of their patients, and the causes of the same, and thereupon minister many times matter that doth smal good, and if sometimes it do not much hurt it is well: so the ministers and preachers of Gods holy word, sometimes by meanes of the ignorance of the state of the people, with whome they deale, sometimes by partiall or corrupted respects in themselves, sometimes by the backwardnes and wickednes of the hearers, and sometimes by one meanes, and sometimes by another, do now and then propound that, that either is impertinent, or else vnprofitable: not sure as in regarde of it selfe, being the Lordes trueth (for so it is alwaies good and holesome) but as in respect of the people or persons, to whome it is propounded, who either thorow carelesnes or prophanenes of heart, or some other corruption lying lurking in themselves, profit not thereby in knowledge, care, conscience, or comfort. Howbeit because we knowe there is this difference in particular, betwixt the bodily medicines for the outward man, and spirituall physicke for the soule, that that which is for the body must haue the present vse,

or be presently vsed, otherwise it will doe
the patient no good, & as in regard of it selfe,
will mould and putrifie. But that which is for
the soule, though it fall out as many times it
hath indeed that it is not powerfull at the first,
for the time present, yet (as that that neuer
will corrupt, but abide vnto eternall life) it may
and no doubt shall bee profitable afterwards
(for the word that is deliuered shall neuer goe
forth in vaine) we are in that hope, and will in
confidence thereof deliuer that, that God hath
been pleased, not only by art, but by hart to ac-
quaint vs withall.

And to persist a little in our begun metaphor
or similitude, of bodily phisicke. You haue by
the two first preachers been trauailed withall
(though it were as a man may say, by bitter po-
tions, and byting medicines, I meane as in re-
gard of mans corrupted nature) for the purg-
ing of bad humors, & the curing of dangerous,
yea deadly diseases and wounds. Now as skil-
full and tender harted physitians and chirurgi-
ons, do after bitter purgations and biting plai-
sters, minister some sweet things, and as wee
may say gentle and lenitiue salues, that by that
meanes the patients may conceiue some hope
of health, yea helpe and cure: so though in con-
science I think the most here, haue not present
need of sweet comfort (and yet what your case
is or may be that way I knowe not) as who I
feare me for all that is past, & euen particularly
for

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for this daies exercise, are not humbled as you should, yet wil I assay in loue, because *charity is not suspicious*, and in hope that though presently it bee not, yet in time to come it may bee fit for you, to my power vttermost to lay open, and to minister vnto you the comforts of God.

In regarde whereof, and for the better performance of which duety, I haue chosen this present place read vnto you, for the better vnderstanding whereof, I pray you marke that in the verse that goeth next before these that wee haue read, Christ our Sauour had in plaine and euident termes declared, that the fulnes of all good things both bodily and spirituall, for this life present & that which is to come, were from the father communicated vnto him, *That so of his fulnes wee might all receiue euen grace for grace*. Which least wee might suppose hee had propounded, as many vaine glorious men doe their glory & glittering, their plate, wealth and substance, their wit, health, & strength, to shew what they haue, and so to hunt after estimation and credit thereby, and not to doe other men good, vnles it be to dafell their eyes, and to amaze their vnderstandings, quickly as it were, not affected only but overcome, with the sight & sense of such things: he doth in these words giue all to vnderstand far otherwise, yea he declareth the quite and cleane contrary: for hee sheweth, that neither the greatnes, and excellencie

lencie of his owne glory, nor our owne poore
 and weake estate, nor any thing else in him or
 from our selues, should hinder vs from coming
 to him, and being made plentiful partakers
 thereof, but further vs rather: for where there is
 fulnes, & the same offered vnto vs for our good,
 in comming being called to partake of it, we
 shall not lose our labour: and where there are
 wants in our selues, we cannot (if we haue any
 sense or feeling thereof) but feelee a supply, and
 indeede receiue it to, when it is so freely offe-
 red. Now because wee doe sometimes from
 Christs person in the greatnes of it, and some-
 times from the wonderfull riches and excellen-
 cie of grace that is in him, and sometimes from
 our own beggery & neede, gather argumētis of
 discouragements vnto our selues, & so sundry
 times lay stumbling blocks in our owne waies
 to hinder vs, from approaching to such soue-
 raigne good, our Sauour laboreth to remoue
 all these impediments, and stones of offence
 whatloeuer, and louingly inuiteth vs vnto him-
 selfe, and freely offereth to make vs parta-
 kers of all his graces, in this sweete and com-
 fortable saying, *Come vnto mee all yee that la-
 bour and bee heauie laden, and I will refresh
 you, &c.*

In which words or verses there are contay-
 ned two speciall thinges to bee marked. First
 graue exhortations, or holy commandements
 if you will Christ thereby prouoking and stir-
 ring

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ring vs vp to come vnto him, & these are containned verſ. 28. 29. which course he knew was necessary, as well because many times we imagine things to be arbitrary, as also because we are backward, by reason of our dulnes, generally to euery good thing, and particularly to this, though it highly concerne our owne spirituall benefite. The second is a weighty reason ioy-
ned to those exhortations or commādements, the better both to proue the truth of that Christ had said, and also the more effectually to perswade vs to walke in the obedience and practise thereof, and this reason is comprehended, verſ. 30.

True it is indeed, that the reason doth more specially concerne the latter exhortation or commandement, as we shall shew hereafter if God will. Howbeit it may not improperly also in some sort and sense be applied and referred vnto the first. But because this is not a poynt greatly materiall now, we wil let it passe and proceede to more necessary matter.

Now concerning the exhortations or commandements, they are according to the number of the verses in which they are containned, two. And yet if I bee not deceiued, both of them tending to one ende, namely by calling men, to come vnto Christ, and to learne of him to minister comfort of conscience to them that were heauie harted. And yet we must not thinke, that they are needles tautologies, or
vaine

aine repetitions, but serue as to expresse
Christis singular loue, towards afflicted per-
sons, he vrging them as we see againe and a-
gaine: so to let vs vnderstand, in the doubling
and trebling of these sweete and comfortable
exhortations or commaundements, that it is
no easie thing to comfort a wounded spirit, and
that a broken and troubled heart, doth not by
and by, though gladly it would, admit and re-
ceiue comfort. For if that were so, one exhorta-
tion, commaundement, call or promise, would
suffice, but rather that euen for their mind, that
is true in them, that is said in the Prophet Iere-
miah, and is repeated in this Euangelist chap. 2
*Rahel weeping for her children, and would not be
comforted, because they were not.*

And yet further betweene these two exhor-
tations or commaundements I make this diffe-
rence, that in the first he calleth vs simply, with-
out any other respect, than of our owne misfe-
ries and his mercies, to come vnto him for re-
leeffe. And in the other he calleth on vs, or com-
mandeth vs to learne of him, and to profit by
our comming, and not to bee as bad schollers,
that haue very good teachers or maisters, and
yet learne little or nothing from them. And we
are further to marke, that in deliuerie of these
exhortations or cōmandements, Christ obser-
ueth this order. First he putteth downe the ex-
hortation or commandement it selfe, as ver. 28
Come vnto me al ye, &c. & ver. 29. *Take my yoke*
upon

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upon you, &c. And then addeth promises, full of comfort and consolation, as, *I will refresh you* in the end of vers. 28. and againe, *You shall find rest vnto your soules*, the last words of verse 29. which our Saviour Christ presseth as wee see by doubling of them, not so much to expresse the infinite treasure of spirituall ioye that is in him, as to assure vs that comming at his call, we shall haue that in great measure and plenty bestowed vpon vs, that shall ease our smart. But all these things with many other moe, we shall see more plainely and vnderstand more fully in the particular exposition of the words themselves as they lye in the text, and in the obseruation of doctrines, arising out of them. To them therefore we come.

Verse. 28. It is saide, *Come vnto me*) In this verse, two things contained: First, the exhortation or commandement it selfe in these words, *Come vnto me, &c.* Secondly, a promise adioyned as for our greater encouragement to well dooing, so for the better assurance of it in our hearts, in these words, *And I will refresh you, or make you to rest and find ease.* In the exhortation or commandement, we are to consider the person exhorting or commaunding which is Christ, comfortably saying, *Come vnto me*: and the persons exhorted or commaunded in these words, *all ye that labour, &c.* who are described by adiuncts or attributes, setting out their miserable estate: and they are two, to wit, *labouring*

ring and being heavy laden. And indeede the promise following respecteth also these two persons, that is to say, Christs person promising to refresh, and the labouring or heavy laden, who are to be refreshed.

The word *Come*, whether it be of exhorting or commaunding, doth not comprehend in it, either readines, willingnes or power of them that are called, as of themselves, as the Pelagians in former times supposed, and our popish aduersaries haue dreamed of late, because we know the scripture saith, *it is God that worketh in vs both the will and the deede according to his good pleasure*: and we belecue that to be true, that our Sauour Christ himselfe testifieth saying, *No man can come vnto mee, vnles the Father draw him*: but rather the singular care and loue of the caller, and that not so much for his owne glory (who in the death and destruction of men can get & will get himselfe a name) as for our good, who when we thinke no such thing, no nor of our owne good neither, being distressed in spirit (for then commonly we are eyther dull and heauy hearted, or else thorow feare are grieuously cast downe, and disquieted in our selues) doth yet notwithstanding call vpon vs and to vs, & willeth vs to goe or come, not to others, for then we might imagine, eyther that he had no power or will in himselfe, or that he meant to thrust vs off: & besides they eyther cannot or will not yeeld vs reliefe, if we

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should repayre vnto them, but vnto himselfe, yea to himselfe alone, and no others with him, for so much doe I take these words, *vnto mee*, to import.

And that this is the true meaning indeede, both places of Scripture, and reasons drawne from religion doe plainly proue. In the xliii. of Hosea, the Lord by the Prophet speaketh thus vnto the people. *O Israel returne vnto the Lord thy God*, as though he should say, to him onely, and to none other besides or with him. To the same end, yea and worthy to be noted, as seruing also for confirmation and exposition, of all the words of this very verse, tendeth that which Christ himselfe saith, *Isaiah 55. which no man doubreth to be an euident prophcie of Christ and the graces, that we shall finde in him, if with a liuely and stedfast faith, we labour to lay hold of him, Encline your eare & come vnto me, heare and your soule shall liue, & I wil make an euerlasting conenant with you, euen the sure mercies of Dauid.* And so much indeed must Christs words import, both there and here, or else we shall see a more dangerous consequence than we thinke of. For if any were to be respected besides him or ioyned with him in that worke of spirituall ioy, then were he not God all-sufficient, because if any were ioyned with him, he were not sufficient of himselfe: and, if he were not the *God of all comfort*, as well as the *Father of mercies*, he

he were not God indeede, and so our fayth & the grounds of the word or Christian religion should be shaken. Besides if it were so, and he told vs not of it, but as a vaine glorious person would take all to himselfe, and more indeede then did belong vnto him, then shall hee bee wrapped vp in a double transgression, the one against his father, towards whom he hath carried himselfe vnfaithfully, whilest he hath not reuealed vnto vs all his counsels communicated vnto him for our good: and the other towards man, because he hath dealt deceitfully with vs, in that he hath deprived vs of hope & helpe, that we might haue from others with or besides him. But all these things are most false and vntrue: for *he was the faithfullest in all the house of God, euen as a sonne*, and comming out of the Fathers bosome, hath communicated vnto vs all his counsels, and we knowe and beleue that *there was neuer guile found in his mouth*. And therefore that sense must of necessity be true, yea the onely true sense. It followeth in the verse.

All ye that labour and are heavy laden. As the former wordes respected the person calling and exhorting or commaunding vs to come vnto him, so these wordes concerne them that are called, exhorted or commaunded. Wherein Christ first sheweth, that he is free from all partiality or respect of persons, in as much as indefinitely or generally hee collecth all heauie
 B 2 heartes,

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heartes, and as it were commandeth them to repayre vnto him. Which doth not onely serue to shew his great care and loue towards them, whilst he both calleth them all, and calleth them when they thinke least of any such matter (for if we would respect him in his magnificence, or men in their owne vnworthines, what are they that should receiue any fauour, specially so great a grace as this?) but also answereth that, that many distressed spirits imagine that God hath promised or shewed fauour to such and such, because of some rare & singular grace in them; and not for his owne mercies sake, or for their miserable distressed estate. But he that will well weigh the course of Gods workes that way, or the trueth of the word, he shall find this to be but an imagination of mans heart and head; or a suggestion and temptation of Satan, rather to hinder the course and passage of Gods grace and goodness, from troubled and afflicted soules. For as for Gods mercies, they are and must bee altogether free, or else they are not mercies. For who knoweth not that man in his best estate after regeneration, cannot merit the meanest mercies of God, not in thinges appertayning to this life, no not in a crumme of bread, or droppe of water, much lesse spirituall graces and eternall life. And though it be true that God acknowledgeth his owne graces in his owne seruants, as the fruits of their fayth, and
good

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good testimonies of their willing obedience, yet he may if he will by reason of the imperfection that cleaueth thereto reiect all. And no doubt would doe it, as in regard of his absolute and exact iustice, but that he hath provided in Christ as a gracious meanes for the forgiveness of all our sinnes thorow his death, so a plentiful supply of whatsoever is wanting in vs, thorow the most perfect righteousness that is in him.

And me thinketh we may see this to be true, thorough the disclaime that Gods people haue made of all, or any good thing in themselves, as Dauid for example in the xvi. Psalm. *My goodness, O Lord, reacheth not unto thee: & Isaiah for himselfe & all the faithful, Chap. 64. Our righteousnesses before thee, are as filthie & stained cloathes.* Yea wee may see it by the course they haue kept, in powring forth of prayers vnto God, in which they haue respected simply and onely these two things, Gods mercy and their owne miserie, and vsed them as principall arguments, both to vphold their owne hearts, and to prouoke him to pittie, as wee may playnly see in many Psalmes of Dauid, but specially in the 86. thorowout. So that we may safely say, God respecteth nothing in man, no not his miserie (though I doubt not but that many times he is much moued therewith) for if it were so, he should either leaue all or none in miserie, and that our owne expe-

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rience teacheth vs the contrary: or if mans misery should be the working cause in him, then those that are most miserable, should soonest and most of all be respected, but that is not vniuersally true neither. And againe, if misery should be the first mouing cause in God, why doest not thou that art distressed, and in thine owne iudgement so much as no man before thee, from thine owne estate and confession, gather comfort vnto thy selfe from the Lorde? Wherefore let the troubled spirit cast away these conceits, and fully assure himselfe that as in no respect, *God is a respecter of persons*, so not in distributing and bestowing his graces, specially spirituall graces. And that therefore so often as this or such like thoughtes come into their heads, they should know that they are, either frō the ignorance or diffidence of their owne soules, or from the malice of Satan against them, and therefore they should beware how they admit the, for men can hardly carry such fire in their breasts and not be burnt. But let vs proceede.

Least this generall and indefinite tearme of our Sauour, should be stretched further than his meaning, hee knowing also euen wicked men to be more forward that way then they ought, he doth restrayne it, by two particular adiuncts or attributes saying (*ye that labour, and are heavy laden*) Where first wee are to marke, that as in other places of the Scriptures,
and

and other cases also, God is wont to resemble spirituall things by bodily, and to speake of the by metaphoricall and borrowed kind of speeches; whether they be things in himselfe, or without him: so here he doth the like, for vnder these termes of *labouring and being heavy laden*, which are properly referred to outward actions and bodily burdens, he meaneth sense of sinne, conflict of conscience, and tugging and wrestling as it were, with and vnder the wrath of God, sometimes in outward afflictions, sometimes in inward sorrow, yea & condemnation for the same. And as this is an vsuall thing with the spirit of God, here and in other places of Scripture, & namely Isaiah 55. saying: *Ho eueryone that thirsteth, come yee vnto the waters, & yee that haue no siluer come buy & eat, come I say, buy wine and milke, without siluer, and without money, vnderstanding there by thirst that which he doth in this place by labour and burdening, and by water, wine, and milke, that which he doth by refreshing & ease*: so he doth it not without cause, specially as in regard of vs, who doe not onely vnderstand outward things better than inward, but vlesse that we be taught of the inward by the outward, we can hardly comprehend them. He not meaning vnder these borrowed termes, to signifie that these outward are able to the full, and as it were lively to set out the inward and spirituall (for that no eye hath seene, no

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care hath heard, no heart can conceine, nor tongue can utter) but by them so well sorting with our nature, to giue vs some sight, smacked or taste of them. And euen herein also appeareth Christs loue, that he is pleased to stoop downe so low vnto vs, and in such base termes to expresse vnto vs such excellent things.

But yet let vs a little more particularly examine the words. That word that is here termed *labour*, doth not signifie simply euery labour, but such a labour as is sore, and hath ioyned with it toyling of the body, and moyling of the mind, with carke and care, yea and wearines both of body and mind ioyned with it as an effect flowing from it, and that causeth some also to turne it thus, *Come vnto me all ye that are weary*. Whatsoever it be, we may see, that Christ mindeth by this Metaphore, to expresse this much vnto vs, that distresse of spirit vpon what cause soeuer it arise, and conflict of conscience, is no small payne, but a great and grievous sorrow, entring deepe into the soule, disquieting the spirit, dittempering the body, and making all parts and powers vnfit for al or any duety almost. And this to be true, the Scripture elsewhere sheweth it, and namely Prou. 13. Where it sayth. *The spirit of a man may indure his infirmitie, but a wounded spirit who shall beare it?* And our owne experience can witnes it, if eyther wee haue beene humbled our selues, or haue beene acquainted with
other

other mens sorrowes that way : in whome it hath taken away for the time, sleepe from the eyes, hearing from the eares, speech from the mouth, appetite from the stomacke : nay I wil say more, it hath caused some, to assay the finishing of their payne, as they supposed, with a shameful & feareful end, had it bin accomplished. Which yet notwithstanding is not spoken here, or propounded elsewhere vnto vs in the word, to discourage or oppresse them, that be in that combate : but as on the one side, to teach all men to cast away securitie and carelesnes, so on the other side to instruct them that are so weake in themselves to relie vpon him that is the God of their strength, who being in them and with them, and for them, will doubtlesse make his strength and power to appeare in their weakenes.

That other word *beauie laden*, is metaphoricall also and translated from bodily burdens vnto spirituall, that is to say, to the burdens of sinne and iniquitie, which lye more hard vpon the soule and spirit, though worldly men feelee them not, than any outward doth or can vpon the bodie: yea though a man should be pressed therewithall vnto death, because that onely reacheth vnto the bodie, and in the midst of the paynes thereof, the soule litle or nothing touched, nay, it may bee very cheerefull and comfortable spirituallly, and so cause the soule almost to finde no griefe, as in the Martyrs, that haue

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haue beene so many wayes, and so grieuously tormented, may and doth appeare : but when the soule is ouerclogged with sinne and the sense thereof, or of Gods anger against it for the same, the very body is tainted thereby with sundry sorts of sicknesses, and diuers kindes of diseases, some recouerable and some vnrecouerable.

And we shall find it much vsed in the scripture, that sinne it selfe is compared vnto a burthen, which may in part appeare not onely by this, when the Prophets call the iudgements of God, that should fall vpon men for their sinnes, *burthens*, that so there might be some proportion betweene the iniquitie they had committed, & the punishment that was executed vpon them for it : but also by a plaine place of the Prophet Dauid, in that eight & thirtie Psalm, that wee sung before this Sermon, when hee sayth: *Mine iniquities are gone ouer my head, and as a weightie burden they are too heauie for mee to beare.* By all which we may see, that sin is not so sleight or light a matter, as men make it, but a wonderfull weight indeede, whether wee consider it in it owne nature, as being the feareful violation & breach of the law of God; or God that is offended thereby, *whose pure eyes cannot behold that that is euill*, & his hand in iustice is prest and ready to strike, or the dangers & dammages they pull vpon themselves, in body and in soule, for this life present, and
for

for that which is to come as terror and feare of heart, shame and confusion of face, discredite amongst men, specially godly, discords yea anarchies in Kingdomes, common wealthes and families, and what not?

And indeede this were a point well worth the wading into, by reason of the grossenes and corruption of the age wherein we liue, making so small or no conscience at all of sinne and transgression, were it not that we are to be occupied in some other points of comfort and consolation. Howbeit this much we may say, that as it argueth small conscience of sinne in men, that mitigate & minse it; so it ministreth small hope of comfort vnto themselues or others, of the happie recovery out of it. For how is it likely, that they should be cured of a disease, that eyther knowe it not, or feele it not, or take it not to be so deadly and dangerous as it is? Whereas on the other side the tender conscience charging, yea surcharging it selfe, with more then it should, it may be (& yet that can hardly be, if men consider rightly the height and the haynousnes, yea the infinitenesse & innumerablenesse of their owne sinnes generall and particular) though in that accusation it suffer much grieve, yea, & plunge it selfe as it were into distrustfulnes, is in more hope of a gracious recoverie (which in the midst of such sorrow of heart should minister some comfort) because sinne felt is more likely

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ly by repentance to be cured and healed, then that that men make no keepe or account of. But to let this point passe, and to come to that that doth more highly concerne our purpose at this present.

Now there followeth the last wordes of this 28. verse: *And I will refresh you*, and containe in the the second part thereof, namely a sweet & comfortable promise for the better drawing yea alluring of vs, vnto him that calleth vs vnto himselfe, but yet for our spirituall good. A thirstie body indeede woulde reioyce to heare, though it were but of water, and not of drinke, to slake the thirst withall: the reason is, because he knoweth it, and taketh it, to be a meane to maintayne life. The tydings of ease, and lighting of him in some sort of a great and grievous burden, to him that carrieth it, is no doubt of it glad some and ioyfull also, because it is a toyle and a moyle, a wearisomnes and weaknesse to body and minde to beare a waight (yea though it be but small) continually. Reason & our owne experience teacheth vs the trueth hereof, in these worldly thinges. But how much more shall this be found true, as in regard of cooling yea satishying our spirituall droughth, or as in respect of easing the griefes and burdens of our mindes: which in deed shall be so much the better welcome vnto vs, when God shall be pleased in mercy to vouchsaue vs the same, by how much the burthens

thens that we beare, and the paines we indure, are indeed grievous, and (as wee may say and shall finde it too, without grace and assistance from God) vnbeareable. In these outward matters, the more that is promised the better we like, and the more great and faithfull the party is that giueth vs his word, the more constantly we assure our selues: but if together with words, we finde vndeceiueable accomplishment, then is our ioy, as a man may say, at the toppe and full. Marke these things here, and then we shall see our comfort increased.

Where are more bountifull promises of truth and life then those that euery where sound in the holy Scripture? Doe not they reach to the good things of this life present, and that which is to come especially? Who more excellent than the Lorde that hath made them? Who more great for power? Who more certaine for good will? Who more assured for fastnesse and fidelity than he? Should not all these rayse vp our spirits in our selues, that are fallen downe within vs, and euen as it were cause vs *in hope or vnder hope, to beleene against hope?* Which that we may the better perceiue in our selues, and perswade our hearts of, let vs a little insist or stand vpon the words.

He sayth, and *I will refresh you*. Who speaketh it? He that cyther cannot or will not performe it? no verely. But Christ God and man in one person, consitting yet notwithstanding
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of two severall and distinct natures, the godhead and the manhood, hath deliuered it, that so we might be well assured, as of his eternall power by reason of his godhead, so of his infinite good will, by reason of his humanitie, and in both of them inseparably ioyned together from the time of his conception, perswade our hearts for the faithfull accomplishment of this most gracious and sweete promise. And wee must needes referre it to, and vnderstand it of his whole person, not onely because in him consisteth *the fulnes of all goodnes* as we haue heard, yea, *euen the very fulnes of the godhead bodily*, but also because that deliuering this as the King, Priest, and Prophet of his Church, and not accomplishing any of these offices, in eyther of his distinct natures severally, but in his whole person, he must in his person needes both deliuer this sweete and comfortable promise, and also effectually performe the same in the hearts of his faithfull people.

The word *refresh* is metaphoricall, and well answereth indeede the tearines before going, of *labouring and being heauy laden*. A man that laboureth sore woulde bee glad of ease: who doubteth of that? The party that hath a sore burthen on his backe would willingly be lighted. Nature, reason, experience & all teacheth the trueth of this. How much more then hee, that is pressed if not depressed with the sight of sinne, with the beholding of his owne infirmities,

firmities, with the feeling and feare of Gods wrath against him for the same, would be glad to find refreshing, ease, and comfort. Which if it be offered and meant as here it is, is excellent: but if it be receyued and felt, is so much the more notable, by how much the soule is better then the body, & the griefes of the one more great then the other, and therefore they being holpen and cured, the mercy ministred and made effectuell, and the comforts flowing therefrom, farre surpassing all. Wherein our Sauour Christ surely offereth no more, then what hee is able to performe, nay, then that which he will accomplish indeed, so that wee labour by that eye of sayth, which he hath bin pleased to vouchsaue vnto vs, and that hand of sayth that he hath bestowed vpon vs, stedfastly to looke vpon it, to lay hold of it, and to applic it to our owne soules, because the promises of God, though most holy, heavenly, & excellent in themselves, yet without sayth to feele and apply the same vnto our hearts, they are as in regarde of men, as if they were not at all.

And yet to say trueth, and that indeede for the further enlarging of the comfort of distressed consciences, wee are to marke, that the word signifieth much more then *refreshing*: though I deny not but that that considered, as it commeth from God, or in it owne selfe, is a very singular grace. And it shall both appeare,

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peare, and be so much the more gracious, by how much all and every one of vs, are vnworthy of it, yea most worthy of all discomfort & iudgement, both for the time present and all continuance. But to the word, I say, it being compounded of a preposition or particle, and a verbe that signifieth to finish, ende or cease from, our Saviour noteth not onely refreshing from the paynes, and pangues that we indure, but putting an ende vnto all troubles, and sorowes that are vpon vs, whether they be outward or inward, which though it shal be principally, yea onely and most absolutely performed in the life that is to be reueiled, according to that of the spirit in the xiiii. of the Reuelations. *Blessed are the dead that dye in the Lord, for they cease from their labors, and their works follow them;* yet it is in manner and measure begunne here, & by sayth we stedfastly beleue the full fruition of it, and thorowe hope holde fast, and with patience looke for, the continuall enioying thereof. And no doubt of it our Saviour hath vsed so significant a word, that he might the better prouide for, and propounde comfort to the wounded spirit, which as it is in anguish and grieve for the present distresse, so doth it trouble and torment it selfe, with this temptation, that it seeth no ende of the miseries and calamities thereof. But be not dismayed sayth Christ, for the time shall come sayth Christ, wherein I will wipe all teares from your eyes,

eyes, all grieſe from your heartes, all ſorrowe from your ſoules, and not onely ſtay there, but giue you perpetuall *reſt with them that are ſanctified*, and ſaued thorow me.

Hitherto we haue trauailed, and I truſt not vnprofitably, chiefly in the expoſition of the words, interlacing now and then ſome things of comfort and conſolation, no whit I am ſure ſtrange from the meaning of Chriſt, or improper or vnſitte for this preſent exerciſe and aſſembly. Now it remaineth, that before we go any further in the wordes of our text, we doe from this verſe gather ſome ſuch good leſſons, as it doth afford vs, for doctrine or conſolatio; becauſe this indeed may moſt properly be called the life of the word, when men learne from the ſame good inſtructions, and indeuour to make good and profitable vie thereof.

The firſt point of doctrine iſſuing out of this text is this, that true and ſound comfort for an afflicted conſcience is no where els, eyther to be ſought or found, but in Ieſus Chriſt onely. Where I beſeech you firſt to marke, both how this doctrine ariſeth from hence, and then the tearmes in which I doe propound and deliuer the ſame. It is gathered from this place, becauſe our Sauour calleth vs vnto him, yea vnto him alone, which if it had not bin the will of his Father, and verie truth indeede, or if hee alone had not had abundant, yea infinite matter of ſtrong and ſolide comfort in himſelfe,

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he would neuer haue done, as we haue already heard in the beginning of this exercise. And for the wordes I doe not say, there is no comfort to bee founde: for meate, drinke, sleepe, friends, recreation, and such like, are comforts I confesse, but not true and sound comfort, for a distressed spirit. For the affliction of the mind is inward, and these are but outward, & therefore are not fitte for a person or partie so affected: and I would as soone thinke and say, that bodily food were the proper and sound nourishment of the soule, as suppose that these outward things, were the true and sound comfort of a broken and contrite heart. But that yet wee may bee the better perswaded of the truth of this point, let vs proceed vnto some further proofes of it.

This was not in my mind obscurely signified, vnder all the sacrifices of the old law, whether they were ordinarie, or extraordinarie, dayly or yearly, generall or particular, all and euery one of them, in measure more or lesse, tending still vnto him, whom they did prefigure and signifie, as the Apostle at large declareth in the Epistle to the Hebrewes. And why him? because he was he alone, *in whom God was pleased to reconcile the world vnto himselfe,* and to make the one and onely object of our faith. And this is plainly propounded vnto vs and proued also, by manifold texts of Scripture both in the old and new testament. I wil
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not trouble you with many, for I like not much of that course. Out of that great store let vs take two or three both playne and pregnant for this purpose. In the 55. Chapter of the booke of the Prophet Iſaiah, a place cited before, and is as we all know and confesse an euident prophetic concerning Christ, and the graces that wee shall finde in him, if with a liuely and stedfast sayth we labour to lay hold of him, it is sayd, *Encline your eare and come vnto mee* (Oh marke how like this Euangelical Prophet & our Sauour himselſe speake & let this phraſe alſo I beſeech you ſerue for a confirmation and expoſition of theſe wordes of our text) *Heare and your ſoule ſhall liue : and I will make an euerlaſting covenant with you, euen the ſure mercies of Dauid.* Euery worde hath his waight, he, yea, he alone will eſtabliſh not a momentary, but an euerlaſting covenant with all his faithfull, of which that wee might be the better certified, hee telleth vs it ſhall be ſure, yea, as ſure as the mercies maniſteſted vnto, and beſtowed vpon Dauid, which as they were large and almoſt innumerable, ſo were they irrevocable and could neuer fayle. To the ſame purpoſe ſerueth a notable ſentence of the Apoſtle 2. Cor. 1. 5. *As the ſufferings of Chriſt abound in vs, ſo our conſolation aboundeth thorow Chriſt.* By ſufferinges of Chriſt, he meaneth not onely thoſe thinges, that we indure at the hands of perſecuters for

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Christs sake: for Christ did not onely suffer that way, but euen those anguishes also, that we haue in our soules and in our spirits, Christ being as much, yea, farre more throwne down and humbled that way than all flesh, as appeareth by his conflict in the garden, and by his outcries vpon the Crosse, saying: *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken mee.* And though these haue bin, were, and are, very good indeed (as those that haue felt and doe feelee the, know and confesse) yet to the ende that wee might assure our selues, that our ioyes shoulde match them, he sayth, *Our consolations abound thorow him.* For if there were not a proportion betwixt our heauines and our comfort, nay I will say more, a superabundance of our ioyes aboue our griefes, then sure, what by reason of Satans malice against vs, and the dullnesse and hardnesse of our owne heartes to beleue, and the greatnesse of our griefes & sorrows besides, it would goe hard with a distressed spirit. And therefore as for the comforting of vs, against the hugenes and height of our sinnes, we say with the Apostle, *where sinne hath abounded there grace hath ouerabounded.* So in this case of inward afflictions, particularly we say, our sorrowes may be fore and our griefes great, yet *our light affliction, which is but for a moment, causeth vnto vs a farre most excellent and eternall waight as of glory in the life to come, so of ioy in this life raysted vp in*
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our hearts by the comfortable feeling thereof.

And he that knoweth foundly, and feelingly belecueth, the names, natures, person and offices of our Sauour Christ, together with the effects that from him in them are communicated to vs, cannot chuse but see, feele, and confesse the trueth of this point. Hee is good, & in him there is not, or cannot be any thing, but that which is absolutely good, as in whose face and presence also, there is the *fulnes of ioy for euermore, and at his right hand pleasures for euer and euer*. He is likewise so good, that yet notwithstanding he is man like vnto vs in euery respect, *sinne onely excepted*, and one that hath bin touched with the feeling of our infirmities, by meanes whereof we may the more boldly come *vnto the throne of grace, & so receiue mercy, and finde grace to helpe in time of neede*. Yea, these two natures are so ioyned & knit (as we may say) inseparably in one person, euen from the very time of his blessed conception in the wombe of his mother, for the accomplishment of the worke of our redemption, and our full comfort thereby, as that they cannot be deuided or sundred, hee being man that so hee might suffer, and God that so hee might ouercome, the perfection and full accomplishment of our redemption standing vpon these two partes, suffering for sinne: this is the first, and then ouercomming sinne, and death, & him that had the power of death, that

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And why is he called Iesus? but because as it is sayd Math. 1. *He should saue his people from their sinnes.* For sinne, and that that inlueth vpon sinne, as shame and confusion of face, horror of heart, condemnation &c. is it that most stingeth mens mindes and soules. Now all these beeing taken away in Christ, why should they not as well and comfortably sing that triumphant song, *O death where is thy sting? O graue or hell where is thy victory? the sting of death is sinne, and the strength of sinne is the law. But thanks be vnto God, which hath giuen vs victory, thorow our Lord Iesus Christ:* as well as mournesfully vtter that sorrowfull voyce, *Wretched man that I am, who shall deliuer me from the body of this death!* His other name Christ, and his stately offices, of King, Priest, and Prophet, contayned in it, and vnder it set out vnto vs, what doe they else, but proue this point? For why was he all in all, but to giue vs to vnderstand that as all was in him, so all must be sette from him, or else it coulde no where be found. And though it bee true that diuers persons had as some one or other of those names (for example Iehoshua) so one or diuers of those offices vpon them, at one & the selfe same time (as Melchisedech if you will) yet neither had they all, or if they had them, they had them but as figures of him, whose person and place they did for a while represent,

represent, and those graces also they had in measure, whereas in him they were in all fulnesse, *that so of his fulnes we might all receiue euen grace for grace*: that is, abundance of grace, and yet when he hath giuen vs all that wee haue, hee hauing neuer a whit the lesse in himselfe.

And this very thing haue all the godly in all ages felt in themselves, and confessed before others, that so if it were possible, they might be made partakers with them of the selfe same comfort. *Abraham*, saith Christ in the Gospel after Iohn chap. 8. *reioyced to see my day, and indeed saw it, and was glad.* Christ meaning thereby that the abundant riches of Gods grace that was in him, was made manifest in all former ages, the fathers by the eye of sayth (as the Apostle plainly sheweth it Hebr. 11.) seeing in the promises that he shoulde come: of whome also as they did very ioyfully lay hold on by sayth so in respect of him and the sweetnes of his promises they contemned all outward things. And Dauid no doubt of it in many places, setteth out this grace and feeling to haue bin in himselfe, and he to haue found fauour with the Lord, as in regard of comfortable assurance of this matter. How gloriously in many places of the Gospelles, doth Peter & the rest of the Apostles acknowledge it. In the 16. Chapter of this Gospel, in the great varietie of opinions, that was amongst men con-

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cerning Christ, some saying he was Elias, some
Jeremias, or one of the Prophets. Peter in his
owne name and in the name of the rest, being
demaunded what they thought, answered for
them all, *Thou art Christ the Sonne of the li-
ving God*: Which what was it else, but to ac-
knowledge that in him alone, and in none o-
ther, was the fulnesse of all goodnesse, truerh,
life, comfort or whatsoeuer else we can thinke
of, or reckon vp? And in the sixt of the Gospel
after Iohn, where it is shewed, that euen for
some points of doctrine which our Sauour
Christ did deliuer but were not rightly vnder-
stood, many of his disciples went backe, and
walked no more with him, Christ deman-
ding of the twelue, whether they also would
goe away, Peter answered (as he was alwayes
a forward fellow) *Master, to whom shall wee
goe?* as if hee shoulde say, certainly we cannot
tell, *Thou hast the words of eternall life, and we
beleue and know that thou art that Christ that
Sonne of the living God*. But amongst all o-
thers yea aboue the rest as seemeth to me, the
Apostle Paul is most plaine and plentiful in
this poynt, whose seuerall sentences recorded
in his holy Epistles concerning this matter,
would make almost a volume. But let vs take
one or two in steede of all the rest. In his first
Epistle to the Corinthians, and first Chapter
thereof towards the ende, he saith concerning
Christ, and for the body of the faithfull, that

he is made of God unto vs, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, meaning thereby, that all, euen the chiefest graces that we can wish or would haue, as true and heavenly wisdom, absolute righteousness euen before God, honest and holy life in the sight of men, and deliuerance from all sinne, and all miseries and calamities whatsoever, are to be found onely in him and no where else. And in the Epistle to the Colossians, once or twice for sayling, he saith, that it pleased the Father that in him should all fulnes dwell. chap. 1. And in the 2. chap. he saith, that in him dwelleth the fulnes of the Godhead bodily: meaning thereby that he was replenished, not onely with most plentiful, but with infinite abundance of all things, both diuine and humane, he being not onely most perfect in himselfe, and passing all other things, but teaching his, that whosoever hath him, neede require nothing more. Yea, that we might see in him, what wee our selues should strue vnto, euen euery one of vs, as in regard of our owne parte or feeling, hee doth not onely tell vs comfortable things, 1. Tim. 1. but setteth a worthy preface before it, saying, *This is a true saying, and worthy by all meanes to be receiued, that Christ Iesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chiefe.*

Neither neede wee to thinke this strange, that godly men haue euery where acknowledged it, for euen the diuelles and wicked men,

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conuicted with the euidence and clearenesse of this trueth, haue bin contrayned, though it haue bin full fore against their willes, & but for the further increase of their condemnation to confesse it, saying, *What haue we to doe with thee, O Christ, the Sonne of the liuing God?* And this is it also that S. Iames meaneth, when he sayth of the, *the deuilles beleue & tremble.*

And surely God himselfe doth not obscurely, but most plainly rather propound this point, both in the giuing of his gracious promises concerning Christ, and in the reiterating of them alio, because as the Apostle saith, *In Christ Iesus all the promises of God are yea and Amen.* As for example, when to our first parents after the fall, hee sayth, *the seede of the woman shall breake or bruiſe the serpents head.* And when to Abraham he sayth, *in thy seede shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.* Which he doth repeat in Genesis, twise or thrise at the least for sayling: and the Apostle doth notably expound it in his Epistle to the Galathians, saying, *in thy seed as of one, which one is Christ.* That so in the particularizing of it wee might see still this to be most true, that no where we can seeke for or find sound consolation, but in him alone. Which also may yet further appeare by this, that God the Father hath not onely provided for the continuance and conueyance of this trueth, ouer or vnto men, by the audible voice of preaching

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in the publicke ministry of the Gospell, teaching them to sound and to publish it, saying. *This is my welbeloued Sonne, in Whom I am well pleased, heare him:* but hath offered to seale it vp in the heartes and consciences of them, by instituting & ordayning certaine visible signes and Sacraments, both in the law and vnder the gospell, all leading vs not onely vnto Christ, but vnto all those sweete graces and heauenly comfortes that we receiue from him.

To omit to speake of the sacraments of the olde testament, which yet notwithstanding were for substance and matter, the same to the fathers that ours are to vs, and to come to the of the newe Testament, yea and but to touch one of them onely, namely the Lords supper. What wonderfull and vnspokeable comfort, doth God in Christ offer vnto vs therein? To say nothing of those that we receiue there, the pledges of his death and bloudshedding, and of all the graces that flow vnto vs therefrom, as forgiveness of sinnes, sanctified vse of the creatures, reconciliation to God, and sundry such like: what a maruailous mercy is this, that vnder those elements of bread and wine, hee should seale vp in our hearts not onely the spirituall strength wee haue from him, to die the death of sinne, and to liue the life of righteousness, thorow his power, but also the heauenly comfort that he comunicateth vnto vs: bread no more effectually or liuely strengthning our hearts,

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hearts, nor wine more effectually making vs to be of cheerefull spirits, than Christ partaken of by sayth, filleth vs with all manner of heavenly and holy ioy.

And by arguments taken from priuation if I may so say, wee may proue this point. The comfort that we speake of is no where else to be found: therefore it must of necessitie be in him alone. If we would looke to Angels and saints departed out of this life, there is a double exception against them, for first we are vncertaine of their good will and sounde affection towards vs as in this behalfe: then we are sure they cannot afford vs that we desire, as who neither haue that power in the selues, because it properly & onely belongeth vnto the Lord; and besides are sundred so farre from vs, in respect of distance of place, that they are not able to stretch out their ayd though they could helpe. As for the rest of the creatures, they are as farre vnable and weake for this worke as the other, if not more. The diuelles and damned spirits will rather do what they can to torment vs, then yeeld any consolation. Man and woman that liue with vs in the world are infirme, and stand in neede as we our selues, and not able in the greatnes of their distresse, to comfort themselves, much lesse vs: vnreasonable creatures are tainted with our sinnes, and sith the wicked enioy them in greater portion than we, cannot yeelde consolation. Our owne things

things that we haue in our owne power, as our wiues, our children, and friendes, either in hard heartednesse against vs, will become *miserable comforters* vnto vs, as Iobs wife and friendes were, *all the sort of them*, or else when we shal consider what iniuries and indignities we haue offered them will increase our sorrow. And the like may wee say of our health, wealth, strength &c. which beeing abused, will cast downe rather then comfort.

But whither am I carried in confirmation of this point? It is time as I take it, to make vse of it, and so to proceed to the handling and hearing of some other doctrines.

We may see by it as if it were in a cleare & true looking glasse, the miserable estate and wofull condition, of all in the worlde, that be without the knowledge and feeling of Christ, I say, both knowledge and feeling (and I beseech you ioyne them both together, for they cannot be sundred, no more then the soule and the body) because as all without the knowledge of him are vnder condemnation, so many that know him, & yet feele him not in faith and obedience, shall certainly perish. For if that bee true which Christ himselfe sayth, Ioh. 17. *This is life eternall to know thee to bee the onely true God and him whom thou hast sent Iesus Christ*: then this by the contrary must needs be true also, that those that knowe not God, and him whom he hath sent Iesus Christ, rest

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rest vnder eternall condemnation; because Christ sayth, *hee that beleueth in the name of the onely begotten Sonne of God, shall not come into iudgement, but hath passed out of death into life: and againe, he that beleueth not is condemned already, because he beleueth not in the name of the onely Sonne of God.* By which we see what sentence to giue not only of the heathen and gentiles, of whom the Apostle speaketh Ephel. 2. *that they were without God in the world: neither yet of the Iewes, Turks & others, who though they acknowledge God the Father, yet obstinately deny and refuse the person of the sonne: but also of many thousandes of Christians, whereof some as hereticks deny his natures, as the Anabaptistes, who deny his humanitie, and our popish aduersaries defacing his offices of Kingdome, in erectting and exercising another gouernement, the he hath prescribed: of priesthood, in placing their dayly vnbloody sacrifice in stead of it: of prophecie, in bringing in new doctrines, and establishing traditions, and other such trash and trumpery. Other some againe knowing him, but denying him thorow loose and lewd life, of whom we may say as the Apostle saith of some other, not much vnlike them, that *when they knew the power of godlines, they denied it notwithstanding in their deeds: and of whom also we may say though it bee to their terror, as Christ sayth Luk. 12. He that knoweth the will of his master,**

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and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.

And yet let no man thinke this a hard or hasty iudgement, for heere wee speake not the wordes of our owne heart or mouth, but of God, and may in some measure in this behalfe say, euen as Christ himselte sayth Ioh. 12. *I iudge no man, but there is one that iudgeth such, euen the word that he hath spoken, it shall iudge them,* according to which when we iudge, we cannot but iudge righteous iudgement, because it being all and onely trueth, it can giue no sentence, saue according to the same. But to drawe it more neere to our present purpose and occasion.

We may learn from hence what is the reason why so many distressed spirits ly as it were broiling in the flame & fire of a troubled and disquieted heart. Surelie either they know not Christ, and the power of his grace and spirit, and then no maruell though they boyle and broile indeed, when they are touched with the sting of conscience for sinne, and condemnation therfore: For how can it be otherwise, seeing there is neither forgiveness of sinnes, nor overcoming of condemnation, nor any comfortable & continuall feeling of any fauor but by him. Or els they feelee him not with his force and effect that way, though they knowe their owne sinne, the punishments due vnto them therefore, with the manifold vnworthynesses they find in themselves, hindring them
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from comfort and consolation. As for the former sort, I would wish them carefully & painfully to labour the attainment of knowledge, because then they are and shall bee a degree nearer to grace & comfort than before, which hauing once obtained, and hartly prayer made vnto God for the sanctified vse, continuance and increase thereof in the, they shall no doubt in good time come to feeling: but till then let them neuer thinke of it, for all their thoughtes that way shall bee but lost labour, because not knowing, they cannot beleue, for how can any man be perswaded of the thinges he knoweth not? And for the other I would in the feare of God counsell them, neuer to thinke of sinne alone, or of condemnation by it self, or of their owne vnworthinesse apart, for then certainly they cannot choose, but be much discomforted & greatly cast down, but to ioyn alwayes therewith the remedies that God hath provided & giuen them thereagainst, as opposing against sinne, Christs sufferings, and the merits thereof, which being strong to take away the cause, cannot but utterly remooue the effect, that is, condemnation: and to oppose against their owne vnworthinesse, the worthines of him that hath deserued all in all, not for himselfe, for he needed no merites, as neuer hauing offended; but for vs, that in his righteousnes wee might stand pure and cleane in the sight of God. And then no doubt but if we doe this, these temptations

tions shall be the more easie, and the sooner overcome, specially if we adioyne therewith all praier for the increase & strengthening of our faith, to apply vnto our selues all the sweete promises and comfortable examples of the word, which indeed, be not only as manie sure scales and pledges for therewnto, but so many particular documentes to instruct vs what to doe; because God is not in this sort or sense, a general God to all, but a particular God to the faithfull, & a special God to euery one of them, as may appeare by these words of the faithfull, *I thank my God*, and in prayer, *My God, my God, &c.* And yet this applying of him vnto our selues doth not straighten Gods goodnes in it selfe, for that is infinitely large, nor hinder it from others, for he may and doeth giue to all abundantly, and yet all they haue to the full, and he himselfe neuer a whit the lesse therfore.

A second doctrine that we may learne from hence is this, that the estate of a distressed and an afflicted spirite, is not so hard or heauy, so dangerous deadly or desperate, as many men in the world take it, and would make it to bee. This is gathered from hence, yea and confirmed also by this, that he doth heer so comfortable call vpon them, and commaund them to come vnto him, which if they had been past hope he would not haue done, for our Sauour hath not done or said any thing in vaine. Surely nothing was hidden from him, hee knew their estate, and accordingly framed himselfe there-

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to. And indeede to say true, it had been to no purpose, because being past hope, it shuld have been in vain, either to haue called or commanded. But Christ sheweth rather the quite and cleane contrarie, namely, that it is good and comfortable, as we may perceiue by this, that our Saniour Christ so tenderly regardeth them that be plunged into that misery.

And this we may vnderstand also by many reasons, as well as by that before alleaged. All things in the world, and therefore this, must of necessity come from God or from nature. That which is from God, is as himself good, yea, very good: that which is from nature, is as nature, vitiated and corrupted. But this indeed is no naturall thing, as may appeare by this, that nature in the corruptiō of it rather sootheth men in sin, than any maner of way chargeth them withall: yea nature is so farre from working it, that it rather shunneth it, and flyeth from it as a most grievous euill. And besides, if it were naturall and from man, why should not all be exercised with it, seeing all men are meerlie naturall, and haue alike sinned as in regard of the taint of original sin? and though it may be that actually all men haue not sinned alike, yett such euery man in his measure or maner, hath broken the law of God: if it were from nature it would follow thereupon that euery man eyther more or lesse shuld be touched therewithall, because euery man hath more or lesse sinned. It being therefore from God, as may appeare

peare by this also, that he hath ordayned many meanes, and amongst the rest the execution of iudgmēt, and the denouncing of the same, by the ministry of the law, and his vsing of the same, as a worthy instrumēt, to bring men ther unto; it will follow thereupon that it cannot be but good, because nothing cometh from him who is all soueraigne goodnes in himselfe, but that which is good euen as he himselfe is. And if it be good, as it must needs bee coming from him, then it is not euill, or so dangerous, deadlie and desperate as many men make it.

Besides, let vs but a little regard the persons, who are most touched therewith, & we shal see that they be the dearest & neerest vnto God, & are best beloued of him. Amongst the Fathers vnder the law, were any more excellent than Abraham, than Moses, than Dauid, than Isaiah? Of Abraham it is recorded, that *hee was the Father of the faithfull, & the friend of God*. Of Moses it is affirmed, that *hee was the faithfullst in the house of God, as a seruant*. Of Dauid, that *hee was a man euen according to the heart of God*. And yet howe much were euerie one of these humbled? Let Dauid stand vs in steed of al. How many not only here and there sentences or verses thorowout his booke of Psalmes, but whole Psalmes of this subiect and matter, plainly shew him, to haue bin far throwne down and hūbled? To reckon them all would require much time, and therefore to rehearse them in whole or in part much more: but let him that doubteth of

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the truth of this read Psal 6. 13. 38. 77. 102. & 130. and if by them he will not be perswaded, that David was touched to the quick this way, nothing I suppose will cause him to beleue it. Vnder the Gospell we haue our sauour Christ himselfe, the principall preacher or minister thereof, a plaine patterne of this point. His whole life was lead vnder this estate, yea and as wee may say, laide downe in it also, as it is at long and at large described vnto vs by the Euangelists. And this argument also, I meane concerning the humiliation of our Sauour, euery way the Apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrewes, doth not onely handle in the sixe or seuen first chapters of that his epistle, but teacheth Gods people to make speciall vse thereof for instruction and comfort. And if anie will imagine that he was so throwne downe, because hee was best, yea onely able to raise vp himselfe and others also: let vs turne our eyes from him vnto others, and yet we shall behold the same still. The Apostle Paule was an *elect* vessel, & chosen to cary Chrestes name amongst the Gentiles: and yet his state and condition this way is notably described in many places of his seconde Epistle to the Corinthians, but specially in the fourth chapter, where hee saith: *We are afflicted on euery side, yet are we not in distresse: we are in doubt, but yet wee despaire not: we are persecuted, but not forsaken: cast down, but we perish not.* And he maketh a particular recitall of many of them in the eleuenth chapter following. But specially that of the twelfth ser-
ueth

ueth for this purpose, where hee saith, *Least I should be exalted out of measure, through the abundance or excellency* (for the Greek word doth signifie both the one and the other) *of reuelations, there was giuen vnto me a pricke in the flesh, the messenger Sathan to buffet me: for this thing I besought the Lorde Ihesus that it might depart from me, but he said vnto me, my grace is sufficient for thee, for my power is made perfect through weaknes.* And shall we thinke that God would lay any thing vpon these the only worthies of the world, saue that which was good indeed? If we imagine so we are much deceiued. And thinke that that will neither agree with Gods nature in loue, nor stand with the fauour & affection that he beareth vnto his children. For no doubt but as he loued them most dearlie, so he bestowed vpon them the greatest and best blessings.

Again if in al affliction we may in our measure say as Dauid the Prophet said, in some particulars of his owne. *It is good for me, O Lord, that I haue been troubled, for before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I haue learned to keepe thy law.* Then much more in afflictions of this kind, I meane sorrow and sicknes of soule for sin past, God vsing it not only as a meane to draw vs to repentance for that which is past, but to make vs in time hereafter to come, more wary of and watchfull ouer that, that in former time hath bitten vs and pinched vs by the heart, and prouoking vs in the heauines of our spirites to spend time that way, to prouide comfort for our selues,

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spirituall I meane, that others are constrained to imploy about bodily ease, releefe and pleasure. And surely the these inward sorrowes & griefs, cannot choose but be good, not onlie because they are occupied about a more excellent part, the soule, I meane, which God no doubt doth especially regarde, but also because they bring forth better, at least sure I am more spirituall effectes: as because they pinch more, more earnest prayer for grace to beare with patience, to vndergo with profit, and to overcome through strength, and doe more conforme vs vnto the Image of our head in his sufferings (who indured much more this way, than any other way) and therefore also better or more excellēt. Where we must yet further note, that that is not simply or only, as in regarde of the afflictions themselves, but because God accompanieth them with the power of his sanctifying spirit, which maketh vs in some measure, not only *peetakers of the diuine nature, whilest wee fly the corrupsions that are in the world,* but like vnto God, as in other respectes, so in this, that as he causeth the *rage of men to turne vnto his praise,* and at the beginning yea and euer since to, *commandeth light to shine out of darknes:* so we out of the folly of our own sins learne spirituall wisdom, & from their darknes which is more palpable and grosse than that of Egypt, labour and learne to fetch the spirituall light of a holy life.

And a further proof yet we haue of this point, in that God himselfe is pleased well to like of & highly

highly to commend this estate and condition:
We know and belecue that he alone is the best
able to discerne of men and matters; and we are
thoroughly perswaded of this also, that for his
entire vprighnesse, he cannot giue wrong sen-
tence or iudgment. For howsoeuer men thorow
blindnes, partialitie or other corrupted respects
haue been and are souly misled, & erred in mat-
ter of opinion and fact, yet none of these thinges
falling into God, he can do no otherwise but de-
termine according to right, so absolute and per-
fect is all and euery thing that is in God. But hee
hath told vs, that he liketh wel of, & will respect
and regard indeed those that are this way exer-
cised. Of which if any man doubt, let him but
marke and imbrace that which we speak accord-
ing vnto godlines and trueth, and I doubt not
but he shall be well perswaded. In the 51. Psal.
Dauid as well experienced in these cases as any
man, saith thus: *The sacrifices of God* (that is to
say, such as the Lord now delighteth in and ac-
cepteth of) *are a broken spirit*: by which he mea-
neth a mind that is bruised and cast downe in it
selfe with the priuity of his owne infirmity and
vnworthinesse. What can be more plain? what
can be more pregnant? And yet as though this
were not sufficient, he addeth further, *A broken
and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*
Gods not despising is indeed esteeming, and he
useth so meane a speech, the better to expresse so
excellent a matter, for no doubt of it, but he wil
well accept thereof, as his owne work in vs. And

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agreeable vnto this is that of the Prophet Isaiah in the 66. chap. *I looke to him* (saith God) *that is poore and broken in spirit, and that tremble at my word.* As if he should say, others I regard not though they come with their hands full of sacrifices: for that hypocrites may and do performe, but this none can come vnto indeed, but such as be sound hearted, and assuredly belong vnto me, and are indeed my holy temple and dwelling place. And what shall wee say of that, that Salomon speaketh euen from God himselfe in the 28. chap. of the Prouerbs. *Blessed is the man that feareth much continually.* Is it not a plaine prooue of this point? And doth it not directlie crosse our corrupted iudgment? Wee say they are in miserable and wretched estate. But wee are ignorant and cannot discerne of those matters specially, no more than a blind man is able to iudge of colours. But God saith he or they be blessed. If he be the *only wise God*, why stay wee not our selues vpon his sentence?

To shut vp, and that as if it were in a word or two the confirmation of this point, wee say that whosoever either considereth God from whom these anguishes and distresses, are sent to good ends doubtlesse, as in regard of his people; or regardeth the persons vpon whom they are laide, to wit the dearest and the best of Gods people; or respecteth the fruites and effectes that they bring forth in the seruants of God; or beleueth God so highly accounting of them, hee cannot choose but giue glorie to God, & acknowledge
the

the trueth of this, namely that the state and condition of a man or woman wounded in spirit, is not so hard or heauy, so dangerous or deadlie, as many times we take it, or men make it to be.

But now let vs descende to the vles of it. By all this wee may see howe much they are out of the way that iudge the disquiet and distressed estate of Gods people in this worlde, either by God to bee layde vpon them for sinne, which is false, for God doth not alwayes punish his for their iniquities, and there are many causes that may moue the godly to mourne, as well as for their owne sinnes, for examples, the mischiefes intended and practised against the Church, the disorders and breaches of the common wealth, the generall ouerflowing of sinne and iniquitie in others with sundry such like: or els take it to be meer madnes in them, or at least superfluitie and predominance, and ouerruling of melancholie. As for madnesse surely, call it by what name you wil, frensie, lunacie, or I cannot tell what, it cannot be so, for then it should goe and come, according to the increase and waning of the Moone, and should cause them affected therewith to be so vnorderly, yea so vnruely, as no man or matter almost should be able to holde or guide them. But those that are in this way touched, we know to bee for the most part in one estate, and so farre from vnruines, that they are very meeke, patient, and ready to be guided, hauing so profited vnder the hand of God, and by the feeling of their owne vnworthinesse, that
if

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if any come to them, and handle them roughly in word or deed, they beare it with quietnesse, and say in some measure as the faithfull doe in the Prophet Micah. *I will beare the wrath of the Lord, because I haue sinned against him, untill he plead my cause, and execute iudgment for mee at which time hee will bring mee forth to the light, & I shal see his righteousness.*

And as for melancholy, I will not deny indeede, but that the conflict of conscience may be somewhat increased by abundance of that perillous humor? And I thinke no man that knoweth what it meaneth, and the conceits it worketh in them, in whom it aboundeth, will euer gainesay it. But there is not all. For if it were onely from thence, why shoulde not all melancholike persons haue it in proportion according to the superabundance of that humor in them? But that is not so, as dayly experience sheweth. Or why should others, and of other complexions also, besides the melancholicke, be sicke of this disease? and that many times more dangerously then diuers of those that haue abundance of melancholy bearing sway in them. Surely God sheweth vs hereby, not onely that their iudgement is corrupt that thus thinke, but also that they are blinde, and buzze out a word touching a matter that they haue small skill in, and lesse experience of, yea none at all. Small skill, because they *knowe not the Scriptures, nor the power of God*, without which indeede no man shall bee skilfully acquainted

quainted with these causes. No experience, because they neuer felte hell in their heartes, or Gods wrath against men for sinne, vnlesse it haue bin in them, either as a flash of lightning for a while, to make them without excuse, or as a mighty fire and flanie to torment them without ease, that so they and the wicked that deny God, heauen, hell, immortalitie of soule and all, might see in themselues, though they haue no comfort thereby, but wonderfull terror rather, how much they are seduced. We say and we say truely, that a blind man canot discern of colours. And why so? because he that must iudge thereof, must both haue sight and wisdom. One of these the blinde man lacketh if not both. Yea we see many that notwithstanding they haue their eyes, are not yet able (for want of iudgement & experience) to discern of the diueritie of colours, specially if so be they be mingled or compounded. Hee that must determine rightly of this matter, either as in regard of himselfe, or as in respect of other men, must haue more then the eyes of his head, and more then the vnderstanding of his naturall heart, *for the naturall man perceiueth not the things that belong to the spirit of God, neither indeed can he, because they are spirituallly discerned, and he is carnall and sold vnder sinne.* Yea he must haue euen the eyes of God, and wisdom & vnderstanding from aboue, that is spirituall, and such as he vouchsaueth to bestow onely vpon his owne children, and to
which

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which also, for their better encouragement of them in it, of his owne mercy he promiset a blessing in the 41. Psalme, saying, *Blessed is he that iudgeth wisely of the poore, the Lord shall deliuer him in the time of trouble. The Lord wil keepe him and preserue him aline: hee shall bee blessed vpon the earth, and thou wilt not deliuer him vnto the will of his enemies. The Lord wil strengthen him vpon the bed of sorrow, thou hast turned all his bed in his sicknes.*

Wherefore when the afflicted person hath many times his griefes enlarged within him, not onely by the sight and sense of his owne sinne, and Gods wrath against the same, but by this also, that such a man and such a man thinketh so of him, and sayth so of him, wee may see hee hath in a readines, and may easily answere euen for himselfe in this behalfe with the Apostle, or as the Apostle did in another not much vnlike saying. *It is a small matter for me to be iudged of man or of mans daies: & the rather too, because God hath not giuen iudgement vnto men, but reserued it in his owne handes, as who is best able euery way most rightly to pronounce. Agayne hee may well and truely say thus to his owne soule, they that so censure me, are ignorant, or vnexperienced, or hard hearted, or partiall, and one way or another souly ouertaken and vnfitte to giue sentence: they know not themselues or their owne estate, howe shoulde they knowe mine. We must stand or fall to the Lord, and*

not

not vnto men. With these & suchlike are they to rayse vp their heartes, and cheare their spirits against the blind, vnexperienced, rash, yea vncharitable iudgement of other men, huddled out thicke and threefold against them, in the dayes of their affliction and sorrow. And if in other cases of farre lighter waight, the Apostle wil not haue vs to iudge one another, but sharply reprobeth it, saying, *What art thou that iudget another mans seruant? He standeth, or falleth to his owne Lord, yea he shall be established, for God is able to make him stand.* Shall we thinke hee woulde approue or beare, so grosse a corruption and foule a fault as this? No verely. Let vs learne therefore, to lay our hands euē vpon our heartis & our mouths both, & not giue our selues libertie either to thinke euill of, or to speake hardly of, those that bee thus throwne downe, and humbled vnder Gods mighty hand, for that is presumptuous against the Lord, and vncharitable towards men.

And another vse may be made of this point as in regard of the faithfull themselves, who minding too much their owne sinnes, and by meanes thereof miserie and vnworthinesse in themselves, & iudgements from God against them for the same, many times make their owne mouthes meanes to expresse fearefull thinges against their owne soules: as for example, no man in so wofull taking as I, I feare I am a castaway, or els why should I thus bee tormented? And these thinges I doubt not but they

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they deliuer from a heart, that seeleth as much
as the mouth expresseth. Howbeit I say, what
art thou, that takest the Lords office into thy
hands? and deliuerest these hard and heauie
things, and that not against other men (which
were indeed vcharitable) but euen thine own
selfe which is vnnaturall? Tell me I pray thee,
May blindnes so farre preiudice mens iudge-
ments, that it shall hinder them from behol-
ding their owne and other mens states? and
shall it not obscure thine owne also? yea, and
that euen concerning thy selfe, and touching
thine owne present state? But further knowe
this, O man, that sometimes greatnes and con-
tinuance of griefes, maketh the best of Gods
Saintes to say as much against themselues as
thou doest, and yet for all that bee in neuer a
whit the worse case. David in the xxii. Psa. cri-
eth out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsake*
me? And yet euen thē he was neare vnto God,
yea & deare vnto him also, or els he coulde not
haue called vpon God, and that in such parti-
cular manner, applying him to himselfe as hee
ditt, neither would the Lord haue so graciously
graunted him his requestes. And why should
not this be thy state, rather than the state of a
dained or reprobated wretch? To vphold thy
heart, thou hast something, euen the sanctified
examples of the people of God, but to de-
presse thee so aboue measure, thou hast no-
thing but imagination and conceit, either of
that which is not in God, or if it bee, is not in
him

him to that ende that thou supposest; or els of that which is not in thy selfe; or if it be, is not in that measure and quantitie, or to those ends that thou imaginest.

Besides I beseech you consider, that it is one thing what men speake of themselves, according to their present feeling, either of sinne in their soules; or the wrath of God against them therefore, which many times may be more than is eyther meete or true: & another what God is in his owne nature, & what he himselfe saith of them. God is exceedingly good & merciful, and is not in deede bound to ratifie every sentence of mans mind or mouth, which he uttereth either against his owne soule, or against others. I hope no man is, sure I am no man can be rightly perswaded, that any particular person is more than the whole Church. And yet God no otherwise approoveth the Churches judgement to ratifie it in heauen, than they on the earth bind according to his will. And why should it be otherwise as in regard of particular persons? Have they better priuiledges than the whole Church hath: if it bee so, let them produce a lawe, not of the twelue tables amongst the Romans, but of the ten commandementes amongst the people of God, or else there is no credit to be giuen. O my brethren, it fareth in the diseases of the minde, as it doth in the sicknes of the body. Many a man, yea skillfull Physitions, take them to be at deathes doore, when God giueth afterwards long life.

On

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On the other side some blesse themselves in their owne heartes and thinke all is well, when death sodainely seizeth vpon them, & leadeth them to the graue and hell. Remember I beseech you what was said before out of the 28. of the Prouerbs, *Blessed is the man (sayth the Lorde there) that feareth much continually.* This state and condition of ours, whensoever or wheresoever it pleaseth God to exercise vs therewithall, is a principall argument vnto vs, that God woulde not haue vs *perish with this wicked world*, hee by this as by other meanes shorow his grace, making vs able thus to iudge our selues. And indeede to haue such a fearefull and checking heart of our selues, for some past, or for feare to fall into it hereafter, is one plaine difference betwixt the godly and vngodly, who are seldome or neuer this way touched, at the least with comfortable effect. And therefore let the afflicted soule, gather consolation to his conscience, and correct his iudgement: for surely that which he taketh to be bitter as gall or wormewood, is by the Lord himselfe, and not by the voyce of man to be proclaymed to bee sweete as hony, or the hony combe.

The promise specified in the last wordes of this verse, commeth now to bee looked into. Out of which gracious and sweet promise we may learne two things. One, that the fulnes of all spirituall ioy and comfort is to be found in Iesus Christ and no where else: which because

it is the same that hath bin handled heretofore, wee will but onely touch, and put you in mind of it, not standing vpon it, because it is done already. And indeede though the point be excellent, and would be handled againe & againe, yet because the time passeth away, & we are to come to other points, we will say no more. Onely let the faithfull conscience looke well vnto it, and prouide his comfort this way, or else let him know he shall neuer be comforted indeede.

The other is this, that if a man will find sound comfort indeede, he must be wel acquainted with the promises of the word. This doctrine as others is both gathered out of this place, & confirmed by it, as may appeare by this that our Sauior Christ is here so plentiful in the promises, *I will refresh you, yee shall finde rest vnto your soules*: which course also he obserueth in many other places: *I wil haue mercy and not sacrifice*: and againe, *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*. And most sweete is that in the third chapt. of the Gospell according to S. Iohn, *God so loued the world, that he hath given his only begotten sonne, that whosoever beleueth in him should not perish, but haue everlasting life*. Neyther is this his practise onlie, but the spirit also in all the writings of the old and new Testament is large this way, and speciallie in that euangelicall prophet Isaiah, as we may see by the manifold promises contayned therein, and speciallie in three or foure chapters together, as 53. 54.

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55. &c. But amongst the rest how comfortable is that of chap. 41. from whence euen vnto the end of his propheticke almost, wee doth nothing els but publish promises and consolations amongst which howsoeuer hee doe sometimes intermingle terrors and threatening, yet he doth it to no other ende, but to make the mercies of God, more exceedingly mercifull as sometimes to disgrace a base colour, or to make a colour that is perfect indeed, to appeare more beautifull and orient, wee set by it another that is nothing so glorious and good. But to our purpose, I say, howe comfortable is that of *Isaiah. 41.* where the Lord commaundeth his ministers to *comfort, yea to comfort his people, and to seek out for them, and to speake* such things vnto them, as may delight and affect their heartes, and to proclaim vnto them that *the set time is accomplished, that their iniquitie is pardoned, and that they haue receiued double at the Lords hands for all their sinne.* And this is yet further made plain by this, that though al the word generally be the object of our faith, teaching vs indeed what wee should beleue and do for Gods glory heer, and our endlesse glorification els where; yet the principal props and staves of our consciences, for comfort & consolation indeed, are no where els to be found, but in the gracious and sweet promises containned therein: which also is manifest euen by the very practise of God himselfe euery where propounding them to an afflicted and distressed heart, as the principall and peculiar

that remedie against the sicknes of our soules that way. In the 103. Psalm he saith, that look how much more high the heauens are ouer the earth, so much doth his goodnes preuaile vpon them that feare him. Againe, he remooueth our sinnes as farre from vs, as the East is from the West. By two fit similitudes taken fro things that are subiect to our sight amplifying the grace and mercie of God, & opposing the same against our transgressions. And in Iſaiah 1. he saith thus, *Though your sinnes were as skarlet, they shall be as snow, and though they were as crimson, yet they shall be whiter than wool.* And feating least men would not willinglie come, how doth he there intereat vs saying, *Come now I pray you and let vs reason the caus together,* as though he should say, let vs friendly conferte of the matter. If you will but lend and bend your eare, and be touched with the true sense of my righteousness and your owne sinnes, I promise faithfully, that I will for mine own mercies sake put away all your transgressions whatsoeuer, though they be neuer so great or grieuous. That shall not let my worke in you: my mercy shall surmount all: yea your misery (if you soundlie turne) shall magnifie the greatnes of the abundant riches of my mercy. The newe covenant that God maketh with his people in the 31. chap. of Ieremie, (and to the end that we might know it indeed to be a promise of the new testament, it is repeated by the Apostle Heb. 8.) how comfortable and full off sweet promises is that?

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After those dayes saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward partes, and write it in their heartes, and I will be their God and they shall bee my people: and they shall teach no more euery man his neighbour, and euery man his brother, saying; know the Lord for they shall all know me from the least of them vnto the greatest: saith the Lord, for I will forgine their iniquity, and will remember their finnes no more. And if the olde testament be so plentifull, what shall we thinke of the new, which doth as of purpose propound, and handle this point or question? Christ himself saith, Mat. 7. Aske, and it shall be giuen vnto you, seeke and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened vnto you. And in the 7. of Iohn, in the last and great day of the feast, he stood & crying out said, He that beleeueth in mee, as saith the scripture, out of his belly shall flow riners of water of life: and in the 12. of that Gospell, He that beleeueth in me, yea though he were dead, yet shall he liue: and whosoener liueth and beleeueth in me shall neuer die. Is not that of the same nature which hee speaketh of in another Euangelist? The whole need not the Physition, but they that are sicke. I am not come to call the righteous, but the sinners to repentance. And what may we think of that which is alleaged in the 12. of the Gospell after Mathewe, out of the prophet Isaiah, A bruised reed shall be not breake, and smoking flaxe shall be not quench, till he bring forth iudgement vnto victory? Out of Pauls epistles wee haue spoken somewhat before in the first point of doctrine that was gathered

red out of this text, yet take one or two. In the 2. to the Corinth. chap. 6. he saith, *We are the temples of the living God, as God hath said I will dwell amongst them and walk there, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Yea I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall bee my sons and daughters saith the Lord almighty.* And the same Apostle deliuereth a notable promise, with a glorious & comfortable preface, prefixed before it also, 1. Tim. 1. *This is a true saying and worthy to be receiued of all men, that Christ Iesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief.* May we not of these and thousandes such like, say as the Apostle Peter doth, that most great & precious promises are giuen vnto vs, & that euen for that end which he expresseth there, nainely, that by them wee shoulde bee partakers of the diuine nature, whilst we fly the corruption that is in the world & thorow lust? Are not these great promises, and may iustly bee so called, because they proceed from the great God, & propounde vnto vs great and excellent matters? May wee not esteeme them precious, not only for the raritie and excellencie of them, but also because they vnderprop our precious faith? Are wee not made in a double respect by them partakers of the diuine nature? 1. that as in regard God is ioyfull and chearefull, we are also become comfortable, and replenished with spiritual ioy. 2. That as he ceaseth from sin, and is continually occupied in well doing, so we learne thereby in our measure and maner to die the death of sinne, and

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to live the life of righteousness: What other men may think I know not, but to me it seemeth that God thus in his worde, setting promises against sin, mindeth nothing els but to shew that as sin is it that most stingeth the conscience, so the meane to heale that byting (as if it were the brassen Serpent set vp to cure the bytinges of fierie Serpents) & to bring comfort against the same, is the promises of God propounded vnto vs in the word, and felt in our hearts by faith.

And this is so plaine and euident a truth, that euen there where God seemeth most to terrifie, I meane in denouncing the threats of his law, or iudgements against sinne, he yet thinketh vpon not only his mercy in himselfe, but as it is manifested vnto men, he euen there, either plainly expressing promises of blessing, grace, and fauor, or els closely implying & vnderstanding them. Wherein surely he dealeth no otherwise, then he doth in the commandments, by a good thing commanded, forbidding the contrary euill, and by an euill thing prohibited, inioyning straightly the louing and doing of the contrary good, that so wee seeing what God aymeth at both in his precepts, promises, threatnes, and all namely not only our obedience and humiliation, but comfort also, we might learne to attaine that, and to look to and for that, which he hath provided for our good.

And yet we shall more clearlie perceiue and behold this trueth, if we respect Gods worde, or the holy scirptures in the seuerall partes thereof,

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hundred as if it were from the promises. For if we
 looke vpon the threats contained therein against
 sinners and sinners, they will be so farre off from
 performing this dutie of comfort and consolati-
 on, that they will rather worke in vs horror and
 trembling; and make vs to bee so not only cast
 downe, but dismayed in ourselues, as wee shall
 hardly, or not at all admit comfort. The doctrine
 of the law separated from the curse and threat-
 ning due to the transgressors thereof, will indeed
 set before vs Gods absolute and exact righteou-
 nesse, and discover vnto vs the duties that wee
 should do to him and to our neighbors. But when
 we consider withall that it setteth out our sinne
 against euery particular precept, that will bee so
 farre from yeelding vs consolation that it will
 ouerwhelme vs with despaire, when wee either
 respect Gods absolute righteousness, or our owne
 innumerable transgressions against his blessed
 law. And though I doubt not but these former
 things may bee good and powerfull to humble
 vs, and so make vs indeed more fit for consolati-
 on and comfort, even as reparatiues going be-
 fore better physicks, for the scouring away of
 bodily diseases, yet can they not of themselves
 helpe or heale (but wounde and terrifie rather)
 for that is the peculiar both office and worke of
 Gods promises made effectuell in our heartes
 by the touch and operation of the spirit. Nay, I
 will say more than that, though the ground of
 Christian religion, and the maine points of faith
 be excellent things, and haue their vse not only

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for increase of knowledge, but euen for the building of vs vp in care and conscience of well doing, and being wel felt may answer many temptations that arise in a scrupulous and doubtfull mind: yet still the promises of the worde, minister matter of assured comfort and comfortable assurance and feeling: which also wee may perceiue by this, that many may haue the knowledge offaith, and yet in the daye of temptation, not be able to strengthen their owne hands or others.

But to proceede a little further in the prooffe of this point: We cannot but confesse, that the examples of mercie and comfort in the word, are full of strong & sound consolation, because they be as if it were so manie seales set vnto the writings of Gods promises, that as heretofore hee hath beene to others, so he will hereafter or still, be fauourable vnto his people. And yet wee shall see, that they lie open though not of themselves, yet by reason of mans corrupted heart to manie exceptions: as for example, they to whom they were accomplished were better than wee: God was more fauourable then, than he will be now, because we haue more meanes of mercie, and haue profited lesse: and therefore are not so properly fit for consolation, as the promises are. For ouer and besides that they are but in men, and therefore full of weakness and wants, wee know and confesse euerie where, that as we must liue not by examples, but by rules, so we must bee comforted, not so much

much by examples; as by promises. And therefore though examples be good, yet not so strögg; whereas the truths certaintie, and power of the promises, is from the might and mercy of him that hath made them, who also is both greater than all exception, and free from the least shew or shadowe of turning. And yet let vs be vnderstood, I beseech you as we should: namely that wee ascribe not this excellent worke vnto the promises themselves, though also wee deny not but euen in that respect, they are spirituall, holy, heavenly, &c. but as by the spirit they are made powerfull in vs, and as by the hand of faith wee are strengthened to applie them vnto our selues: for otherwise we may say of them, as wee do of the rest of the word, that without the spirit and faith they are as if it were a *sealed book* vnto vs for vnderstanding, and a *dead letter* for instruction & consolation, hauing euen no other vse in vs, than the rest of the worde nor felt or obeyed, namely to make vs without excuse, or to cause our sorrowfull & heauie estate, to beeöe more sorrowfull and heauie, because wee see holy & heavenly thinges propounded vnto vs, and yet haue nor either hearts to vnderstand, or soules to beleue. This therefore must be our principall care, to make that profitable vnto vs that GOD graciously prouideth and propoundeth for our good.

Now wee come to the vse of this necessarie doctrine, which as I take it, is or may bee twofolde. First, for instruction. Secondly, for consolation.

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for instruction, we may plainly perceiue hereby, what is the reason of so much heaviness of heart, sorrow, and feare, in so manie of Gods people and children in the world. Surely either they are ignorant of these sweet and gracious promises not so much as hauing either heard them, or knowne them, or els if they haue in some measure of knowledge beene acquainted with them, they haue in the carelesnes of their owne hearts, or not feeling present vse of them, let them slippe out of their miodes, like leaking vesselles, not able to containe such good things; or els if they haue knowne them & remembred them thorow want of comfortable feeling of the good things propounded therein, they haue beene vnto them, as if they had, either not been at all, or as though they had contained in them, no such sweetness and pleasure as they doe indeed. And let vs not thinke this strange: for euen as ignorance in religion and carelesnes to obey the things that wee know, is a principal cause of all transgression and loose life, men not being either willing or able to do the things they are not acquainted withall, and for the things that they know, blearing out their know- and laying the raines in their owne neckes: so they not knowing of the promises, or they not minding of them, or not striving comfortablelie to feele them, is the verie wellspring as I maie so call it, of all inward and outward discomforte, and distresse of conscience especially. For how can the wounded conscience admit comferte, when

when he vnderstandeth not the comfort presented vnto him: or if hee forget it, where is his ioy in the middest of his forgetfulnesse? We saie that of an vnkowne thing there is no desire: & wee maie in proportion saie the same of a thing that is not remembred. For our owne parts let vs know that as Sathan laboureth to root out of our hearts generally, all the seede of the worde, that thereby keeping vs in blindnesse and ignorance, hee maie make vs runne riot at his pleasure: so especially he trauaileth, either to hinder vs from receiuing, or hauing receiued from making good vse of the sweet & comfortable promises of the worde, the verie matter if I may so saie, and a speciall meane I am sure of our spirituall comforte. For the redressing and representing also of which enormities in vs, a godly man, that is in some sorte ignorant, should labour to abound in the knowledge of them: as he that is forgetfull should refresh his memorie, by often reading, meditation and conference in them, and that not onely by and with his owne heart, but euen by other men also: and they that want feeling of them should looke vnto Iesus Christ, in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen, and should be much and often in the vse of all the meanes whereby Christ is become ours, as the word, sacraments, praier, fasting, &c. But aboue all they should regard, and labour for the holie spirit, to be shed abroad in their hearts, both to make all these things before named powerfull in them, and to pledge vp also
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the truth and certaintie of the promises themselves, because it is the earnest pennie of our adoption and inheritance. That so sith sathan there laboureth to assault vs most, and shake our faith as in that behalfe, wee might thither bring all our aides and defences, as they doe that are in a besieged hold, and so we better made able not onely to indure the assault, but to drive our foes with their forces, from our gates & walles. And hee or shee or they whosoever that can do this, they maie wel assure their hearts, that howsoever they maie now & then, or for a while be buffeted & beaten, yet they shal neuer be vanquished or overcome; because he that is in the & with them & for the, by himself & his blessed spirit, and all other effectuall meanes of consolation and comfort, is stronger & greater than al.

Secondly, it is verie fit and meet for confutation of a conceit, that riseth vp in mens minds, yea & is deliuered also by the mouthes of some specially our popish aduersaries, who tell vs that this propounding of comfort in the promises of the Gospell, acquainting the people therewith maketh men secure & carelesse. But herein surely they shew themselves blinde & blockish, as who haue not yet learned to distinguish betweene a thing good in it selfe, and mans corruption abusing that which is good. They may by the selfe same reason abolish all the other parts of the word, and disannull or euacuate the sacraments, because infinite thousands in the world abuse them, to the increase of sin and li-

centiousnesse in themselves: yea if they will or can make frustrate Gods grace, because manie turne it into wantonnes, and say sith is this true, that *where sin hath abounded, there grace hath superabounded, therefore let vs continue in sinne that grace maie abound?* And if for or in outward things, we should reason as they doe, and haue it followed that so is deliuered, we might easily bring all disorder and confusion into the world, and ouerthrowe the whole course and rase of mankind. Some abuse drinke to drunkennes, and other some meate to gluttonie and gourmandise, therefore there must be no vse of meate and drinke: what is this els but to starue the excellētest of Gods creatures, man I meane? Many abuse apparell to pride, and puffing vp. It were best therefore to haue men goe naked, which what were it els but to become or bring in new Adamites? Diuers turne magistracy & authoritie into tyrannie, and therefore with the Anabaptists, away with all ciuill authoritie and gouernment: which what were it els, but to bring in Anarchie, worse than tyrannie by much? But to the point indeed. The promises of themselves, and in the seruants of GOD bring forth no such effect. For as they are deliuered for the comfort and consolation of them that are afflicted and *mourne in Sion*, as may appeare in euerie place where they are alledged, & namely in the two first verses of the 40. chapter of Isay, and tend indeede to manifest Gods loue and mercy, that so in the truth and performance of
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his word, wee might bee well assured, that noo thing should put an eternall separation between him and vs, that hath loued vs so tenderly, and giuen vs such gracious promises of truth & life. So surely the doctrine euery where adioyned to those promises in the word, doth plainly shew that God meaneth not, to make men secure and carelesse thereby, or would haue them to inferre anie such thing thereupon. And therefore when in the latter end of the sixt chapter of the second epistle to the Corinth. hee had alledged manie promises of peace & goodnes, he beginneth the seventh Chapter thus. *Seeing thow wee haue these promises, dearly beloued, let vs cleanse our selues from all filthines of the flesh & the spirit, and finish our sanctification in the feare of God.* And the like he doth in the second chapter of the second epistle to Timothy. saying, *The strong foundation of God remaineth sure, and hath this seale, the Lord knoweth who are his: but withall let enery one that calleth vpon the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.*

And let this suffice for these wordes of the 28. vers. with the rest I cannot proceed, because we haue been somewhat long: and as I am wearie in my selfe, so am I loath to bee troublous or tedious vnto you. God may be pleased hereafter to giue both occasion, time and place, to pursue these things: and to finish the residue. In the meane while, it shall not bee amisse, in a word or two to apply that hath been saide, to our present assemblie and causes theroof, and so

to shut vp this exercise.

The causes that haue moued vs thereto, are great & grieuous iniquities preuailing vpon al & euery one of vs, the heauie rod of penurie and scarcitie that ouerfloweth the land, warres and rumors of warres, and the same intended and threatned against vs, both outward and inward at home and abroad. To diuert or turne away, the punishments for our sinnes and the iudgements that wee confesse and acknowledge, we haue iustly deserued therefore, no outward thing will serue, though it bee neuer so great & glittering or seeme neuer so pleasant or painefull, but soundnes of heart and humble walking with our God in all our waies, and all the dayes of our liues. To this we haue been exhorted and prouoked by manifolde good meanes, and namely by propounding singular comforts and consolations which the Lord hath vouchsafed vnto vs, the better to meet with our backwardnes from approching to him, wee being sometimes discouraged from doing of that dutie, by his almightie greatnes and excellencie, and sometimes let from it, by the consideration of our owne base and vnworthie estate. But yet sith hee hath solouingly and fatherly called vs, and for our better encouragement giuen vs gracious promises, *let vs drawe neere with a true heart in assurance of faith, our inward parts being pure from an euill conscience, and washed in our bodies with pure water.* And so no doubt the punishments wee presently feele shal be remooued

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moued, the feare of our foes at home and abroad shall be put farre away, and wee shall not need to dread the curses of that Balaam of Rome, nor the vaunts and attempts of that proud and persecuting nation of Spaine, nor of anie other our enemies bodily or ghostly, because that our consciences being quieted with the comfortable feeling of all Gods fauours, and specially of the forgiveness of our sinnes, and the saluation of our soules, wee may comfortably say, as the faithfull that haue gone before vs haue done, *I will not bee afraid for ten thousand of the people that should beset me round about. Nay though I should walke in the valley of the shadow of death, I will yet feare none ill, for thou art with mee, thy rod and thy staffe, they comforte mee. Yea that wee are perswaded that neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall bee able to separate vs from the loue of God, which is in Christ Iesus our Lord.*

Now let vs pray that God would giue a rich and plentiful blessing in our seuerall hearts to all the good things that haue been deliuered vnto vs at this time: and let vs humbly intreat him to make them profitable in vs, not onely for this present, but for all the daies of our liues, to his glorie and our euerlasting comforte thorow Christ.

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